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### Group seeks volunteers to help foster youth

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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Jan. 3, 2001

**Contact:** Tamera Sunderland, Building Skills for Adulthood, (406) 243-6177 or (800) 556-6803.

### **GROUP SEEKS VOLUNTEERS TO HELP FOSTER YOUTH**

#### **MISSOULA —**

A group that helps teen-agers move from foster care to independent living is recruiting mentors and life-skills facilitators for youth ages 16 to 21.

Building Skills for Adulthood, a collaborative program between The University of Montana and the Department of Health and Human Services, will host mentor training for volunteers from 6:30 to 9 p.m. every other Tuesday Feb. 13 through May 8 in UM's University Center Room 207.

Training is free and open to the public. Volunteers should call Tamera Sunderland at (406) 243-6177 or (800) 556-6803 for more information.

Volunteers donate two to three hours per week to help foster youth develop life skills such as money management, job seeking, apartment hunting and more. Without these skills, moving out of foster care can be difficult. Building Skills provides opportunities to work one-on-one with a youth or lead a group in life-skills development.

Research has shown that young adults who have left the foster-care system are overrepresented in homeless, public-assistance and prison populations. Youth with mentors demonstrate better attendance, grades and attitudes in school, along with improved self-confidence and family relationships.

UM-based Building Skills for Adulthood works to match foster youth with mentors in communities throughout Montana.

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